

Union Helvetia Banquet

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UNION HELVETIA BANQUET.

In quick succession the annual festivities of the various Swiss societies and clubs are taking place round about this time of the year. Last week the Choral Society made a delightful beginning, this week the Union Helvetia very successfully held its Annual Banquet and Ball, only to be followed a few days later by the grand display of the City Swiss Club, and next week by the Rifle Association's fete. One gentleman, the *Swiss Observer's* reporter, is having a very pleasant, though strenuous, time of it. Such good menues, wines and speeches, and such jolly company on each occasion no one would like to miss.

The Union Helvetia's Annual Banquet and Ball, which took place at headquarters on Monday last (November 18th), was a very happy affair. Mr. Rossier, the steward of the U.H. Club, managed to give the numerous guests as good a meal as anyone could wish for. The few speeches delivered lacked none of the qualities recently postulated by impatient critics in the S.O.—they were short and abounding in humour. Especially the guest of honour, our Minister Mr. Paravicini, was in his best oratorical form, setting his hearers roaring with laughter.

Unfortunately—contrary to expectations—no manuscripts of the two most important speeches were supplied to us, so that we can only give you the gist of them.

After the customary loyal toasts to the King and "La Patrie," proposed by Mr. Paravicini, Mr. A. Indermaur, President of the U.H. Territorial Administration, England, welcomed the assembly and brought out the toast of the Union Helvetia.

Of the activities of his organisation—with the exception of the S.M.S. the biggest and most important one for the furtherance of the interests of many thousands of our compatriots abroad—Mr. Indermaur had a very proud tale to tell. The Union Helvetia was founded in 1886. To-day it has branches all over the world. Under the Territorial Administration of England are the following branches, apart from the London Section: Birmingham, Brighton, Harrogate, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin and Cape Town. Further branches will be opened shortly in Bournemouth and Johannesburg, South Africa. Through the Union Helvetia engagements were secured this year (up to date) for 2434 applicants in London and 203 in Margate. From January to October this year the Sick Fund paid out £179 9s. 0d., and £51 Old Age Pensions.

Mr. J. P. Gallo, President of the London Section of the U.H., proposed the toast for the guests and the ladies. Mindful of the agonised complaints in the S.O. about dull and lengthy after-dinner speeches Mr. Gallo assured his listeners that he would not make long winded phrases.

"It has been a great pleasure to us," he continued, "to have so many guests here to-night and we owe them that meed of thanks for the compliment they have paid us by their presence. We sincerely hope that we will have the pleasure of enjoying their company on many more occasions."

"On behalf of my committee and our society I extend the most sincere thanks to our Minister, Mr. Paravicini, for having so kindly accepted our invitation to be with us and to take the chair."

The following invited guests have also honoured us with their presence: Mr. & Mrs. Dupraz, President du Fonds de Secours Suisse; Mr. & Mrs. E. Werner, President of the City Swiss Club; Mr. & Mrs. Paschoud, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society; Messrs. B. Orelli & C. Bolla, members of the Unione Ticinese; Mr. L. Pache, President, and Mr. F. Winkelmann, of the Schweizerbund; Mr. & Mrs. Scheuermeir, representing the Nouvelle Société Helvétique; Mr. Bommer, President of the Swiss Choral Society; Mr. Meier, representing the Swiss Gymnastic Society; Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Schmid, President Swiss Rifle Association; Dr. Egli, Editor of the *Swiss Observer*; Pfarrer & Mrs. C. Th. Hahn, Schweizer Kirche; Mr. Pradervand, Souffragant de l'Eglise Suisse de Londres; Mr. & Mrs. A. Indermaur, President Territorial Administration; Mr. & Mrs. P. Lehrian, President Clubhouse Commission; Mr. & Mrs. A. C. Juriens, President Société Culinare Suisse; Mr. A. Bonn, Brown's Hotel, represented by Mr. Bieri, Manager."

In conclusion Mr. Gallo sang the praise of the ladies.

"Do you think," he exclaimed, "that there are words of praise good enough and great enough for the woman that for 21 years works to make a man of her son and then again for the woman that comes along and makes a fool of him in twenty minutes?"

Every success and achievement reached by men is in nearly all cases due to the inspiration of some woman. I am asking you where would Leonardo da Vinci be without his Gioconda, where would Dante be without his Beatrice, Antonio without Cleopatra, Milo without Venus and Romeo without Juliet, and what would we be without mothers to watch

over us and sisters that give up their dancing evenings to see that everything in our wardrobe is spick and span. What about the wives that toil all day to get everything ready for the dear man to come home to.

"So I am asking you to fill your glasses to the brim and drink the health of our guests and the dear ladies."

Mr. Dupraz, on behalf of the guests, expressed their appreciation and thanks. He said:

"It is with the utmost pleasure that I rise to tell you, on behalf of us all your guests, how wonderfully at home we always feel at 1, Gerrard Place and, as I believe I have mentioned on a previous occasion, being at the Union Helvetia is like being transplanted in some corner of our beloved country. Here everything is so Swiss, and therefore so perfect—from the excellent dinner just put before us to the numerous British-born wives of your members."

"Of course, Dear Ladies, you are Swiss, and I hope that you are proud of it! You may not realise that, to marry a Swiss, is an honour which is much sought after but seldom realised. Firstly, as you may have experienced, these hardy mountaineers are not so easily captured, secondly, if you reckon that the whole population of Switzerland is only about half of that of London, you can imagine what a small chance there is for an English woman to secure one of these rare birds."

"All the Swiss societies in London entertain the most cordial relations with the Union Helvetia and this is especially the case with the Institution which I have the privilege of representing to-night. From our experience in the Swiss Benevolent Society there are, so to speak, on the fringe of the catering trade, quite a number of our countrymen who find great difficulty in securing regular employment. In our efforts to assist these people, we are in almost daily contact with Mr. Finger and your registry office, and I am very glad of this opportunity to thank you for all that you are doing in order to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunate ones."

"We have heard from your two Presidents of all the work you are doing and the extensive scope of your activities."

"The Union Helvetia has merited the thanks of our people at home and of our Colony in London, and we can but encourage you to carry on the good work with the same energy as in the past. In this you have our very best wishes and I ask you my Fellow Guests to raise your glasses and drink to the happiness and prosperity of the Union Helvetia."

Mr. Paravicini thereupon—ex tempore—made his most amusing speech. He expressed his astonished delight at the curious fact that his Swiss audiences were nearly always respectfully silent when he, a mere representative of the Government, was speaking. Amongst his diplomatic colleagues he was in a peculiarly lucky position, the speaker continued, in so far as where ever he went to any function he was sure to be attended to and looked after particularly well by the Swiss porters and waiters and managers of all the best places of entertainment in the Kingdom. To Mr. Juriens, the eminent chef de cuisine, who together with several other compatriots of ours had the honour of preparing the meal for the Victoria Cross heroes given by the Prince of Wales at the House of Lords, Mr. Paravicini paid his special compliments. Disraeli once said as a young man that people would one day esteem it an honour to hear him speak in the House of Commons. Mr. Juriens' triumph was equal to that of Disraeli, for he had his masterful say in the House of Lords.

Mr. Juriens, after expressing his thanks for the flattering remarks of our Minister, called on Mr. A. Wyss, as the better man at speechifying, to say a few words on behalf of the Société Culinare, which he did in a very humorous way. In conclusion Mr. Paravicini gave the gold medals for "25 years' faithful membership of the U.H." to Messrs. A. Pulver, A. Dudley, E. Bhend, and O. Meyer.

During the dance which followed (to the accompaniment of an excellent concertina-band) Miss Diethelm entertained the company with some amusing impersonations.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

"Schüblig und Chrut" was the Menu for the supper which preceded the last Monthly Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society. And the substance and size of the delicious sausages was such that all those who had partaken of the supper were ready for anything when a little after 8 o'clock the Chair was taken by our worthy President Mr. M. Paschoud.

The Meeting was opened by singing "Salut! glaciers sublimes!" Some of the voices were, no doubt, out of training but the spirit was there and there was, of course, no mistaking of those who are members of the Choral Society. Maybe some others will join that Society now in order to be able to lead the choir at coming meetings of

our Society. At any rate, the idea of this singing is a very good one.

After the Chairman had welcomed the Members and guests, the Hon. Secretary read the minutes of last meeting which were accepted with due thanks. One Admission and five Resignations were dealt with. Four of the latter were transfers to other Sections of the K.V. and were duly accepted. The fifth case was concerning a member who had, through the help of our Employment Department found a job in the far East. It was resolved to try and induce this member to retain his membership.

The President, in his capacity as Chairman of the Education Committee, then read out a report concerning the recent change in the Headmastership at the Day School and the reorganisation which had taken place in that institution. As it was decided that this report should be published shortly we need not discuss it here. It suffices to say that it covers the ground well and Members will no doubt be pleased to read it.

Among the correspondence was a letter from the Central Secretariat in Zürich requesting our co-operation. As those Members who read the Centralblatt could read in that paper, there exist a number of so-called "Paper Firms" (Scheinfirmen) which are co-ordinated through a "Centrale" at the Central Secretariat. We were informed that they had already arranged for exchange of correspondence with the G.D.A. of Germany. They now would welcome our co-operation as here the English Language and the English way of doing business would come in as important factors.

After a short discussion it was decided to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Education Committee.

A communication from Zürich informed us of a plan to hold, in connection with next years Delegates Meeting, in Zürich, a General Members Meeting. The Meeting agreed that such an arrangement ought to be encouraged although one could, of course, not foresee how many members would be able and willing, in addition to the nominal Delegates, to attend. Still members who intend to go to Switzerland might well keep this in mind. Probably some of them could make their stay there to coincide with the time of the meeting planned. The date is not yet fixed, so far as I know, but no doubt the meeting will take place sometime in May.

Informed of the death of an old Friend and contributing Member—Mr. John George Sigg—the Members rose from their seats and paid a silent tribute to the departed.

The President then introduced to the Meeting an Ex-Committee Member of the Milan Section, Mr. Schenker, who has come to England to study English at our Day School. He was warmly welcomed by President and Members.

The President closed the Meeting at 10.45.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

H. Landis, Zug: "Chinese Porcelaine." Miss V. Buol, Flims: "Parting." O. Amstad, Beckenried-Zürich: "Elections in England 100 years ago." Miss E. Knaus, Bassersdorf: "Chalander Marz." Miss A. Zahner, Hönegg: "Wagner." Miss E. Krummenacker, Reinach-Basle: "Bee-Keeping." Miss E. Schulthess, Zürich: "Holland." Miss M. Ziegler, Olten: "Churwalden."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"That Free Trade is Desirable." Proposer: L. Bollag, Baden. Opposer: A. Hürzeler, Aarburg.

"That Suicide is Justifiable." Proposer: Miss H. Lanz, Burgdorf. Opposer: Dr. L. Pfenniger, Zurich.

Friday, November 15th: A very interesting and instructive lecture was delivered by E. A. Webb, Esq., on "The Middle Classes and the Claims of Labour," which was followed by a lively discussion. Mrs. Paull, B.A., presided and conveyed the thanks of the audience to the lecturer.

Just a word to my Swiss friends from

Caran d'Ache

Although coming straight from Geneva, I write in a practiced hand perfect English; figures and calculations are my joy. I glide with ease over the worst paper and the touch of my beautiful polish is a delight to the hand. Ring CENTRAL 6467 for

The Swiss Pencil

Yours faithfully,

Caran d'Ache

